

Battle of the skies above Surrey

27 February 2026



Air pollution, noise, and climate change are three of the reasons Surrey Heath Borough Council is objecting to plans to increase weekend flights at Farnborough Airport. The business travel hub has a cap on weekends and is looking to increase that as part of a wider push to get to 50,000 annual flights. The airport has also seen an increase in demand despite only 2.6 people travelling per flight, the February planning committee heard.

The application, part of a neighbouring authority consultation, wants to increase weekend and bank holiday flights from its current limit of 8,900 to 13,500. As it stands there are about 30,000 flights using the airport, which sits 1.5km from the border of Surrey Heath, but it has a limit of 50,000 a year. If the application is approved by neighbouring Rushmoor Borough Council, airport chiefs expect it to reach its capacity by 2033. If it is rejected, that pushes the target date back to 2045.

Officers told the meeting: “The climate change manager has raised doubts about whether projections, which rely on the suggested level of uptake, are sufficiently robust. The council therefore raises objections on the noise, but also on the potential impact on air pollution, potential impact on biodiversity, potential impact on climate change, and that the economic benefits to this borough do not outweigh the harm.”

Councillor David Whitcroft (Liberal Democrat; Mytchett and Deepcut) said the airport was currently turning away weekend flights and felt the weekend slots would be used primarily for wealthy leisure travellers - with the borough paying for the impact. The meeting heard that about 70 per cent of aeroplanes landing at the airport come in over the borough, and that it misses out on any direct economic benefits. He said: “The current level is 8900, and that level has been met. So if this application were to go through, the weekend impact on residents particularly in Mytchett, Deepcut and Bisley would be immediate and dramatic. Weekend flights would go up by 50 per cent. Why does it need to go up on weekends for a business airport designed to relieve traffic from the bigger airports, because it has seen an increase in leisure travel. Should people be able to avoid what they consider to be the inconvenience of mass commercial flying in order to create noise and air pollution simply because they can afford it.”

The plans were universally objected to by all members. The final decision rests with Rushmoor Borough Council at a yet-to-be-set date.

Chris Caulfield LDRS Farnborough Airport (image SHBC)